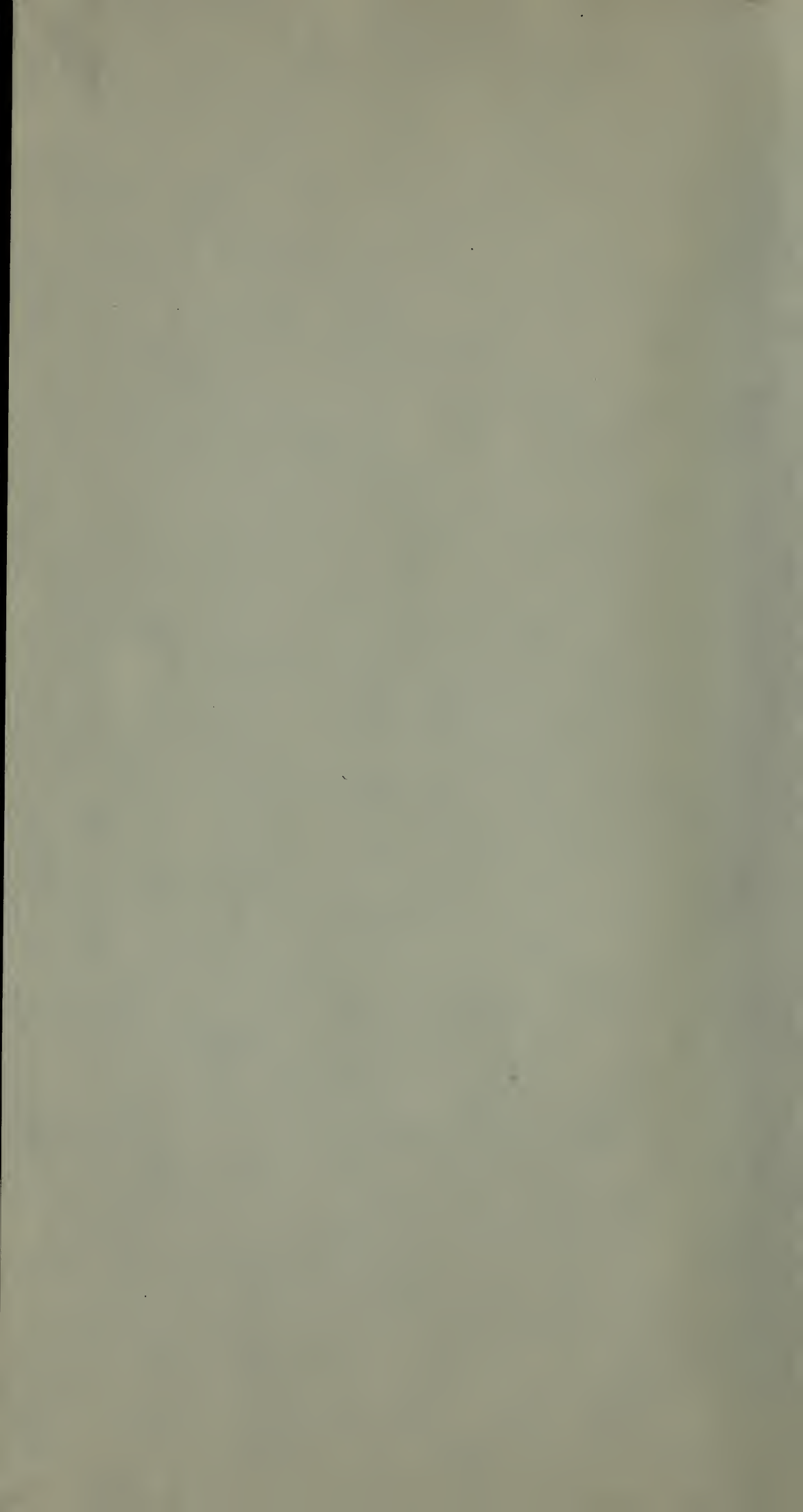


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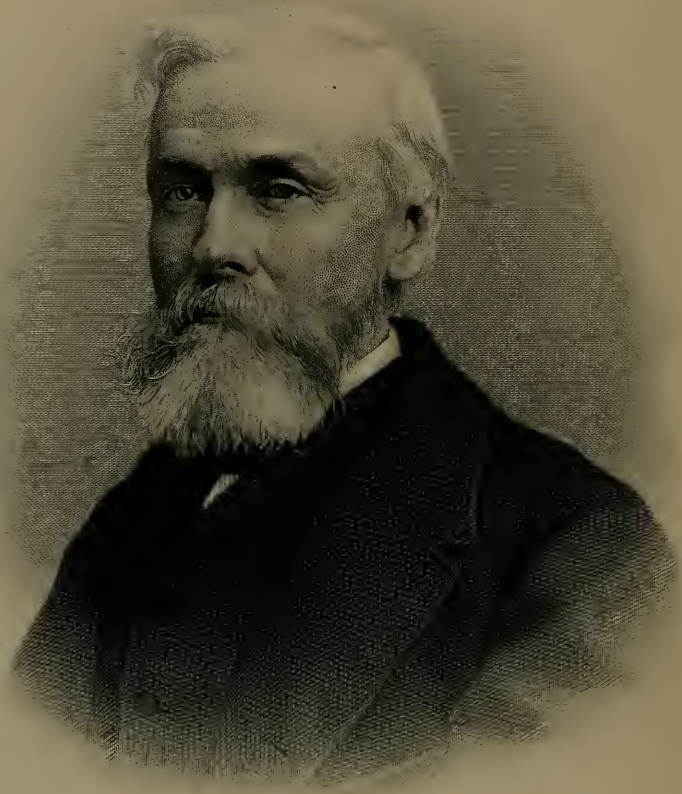




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EVERT AUGUSTUS DUYCKINCK.

A Memorial Sketch.

BY WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER.



Evert A. Duyckinck.





EVERT AUGUSTUS DUYCKINCK.

A MEMORIAL SKETCH

READ BEFORE THE

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

JANUARY 7, 1879.

BY

WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER.
" "



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EVERT AUGUSTUS DUYCKINCK.

Born, November 23, 1816.—Died, August 13, 1878.

IN attempting a sketch of the life and literary labors of our late associate, Evert A. Duyckinck, I dismiss, at the outset, any misgivings as to the degree of general interest attaching to a career whose daily course came so little under public observation, and whose chosen aims were so far removed from the ordinary pursuits of men. At first thought the life of a scholar and man of letters, passed chiefly among his books, and marked by an avoidance of society and a withdrawal from the world, presents few points of attraction, and may seem to furnish little material for even a brief biographical notice. But the friend whose memory we honor was not a mere recluse, living a selfish life of intellectual ease. He was a faithful and life-long worker. If his field of labor was retired, it was no less the scene of constant and patient toil; if he preferred the quiet of his books and the companionship of their authors to the stir of active life and the social intercourse of the world, it was not to hide or bury the talents committed to his keeping. In his self-chosen seclusion he was always contributing his measure of honest work to that true commonwealth of letters in which there is no conflict between the capital of intellectual gifts or acquirements and the labor of brain and hand, but where all are co-workers, each in his own sphere, for the advancement of the best thought and intelligence of the race.

Evert Augustus Duyckinck, the son of Evert Duyckinck and Harriet June, was born in the city of New York, November 23, 1816. His family name was conspicuous in the list of the early Dutch settlers in this part of the country. In Hazard's collection of State papers there is a notice of the depredations of the Connecticut Colonists upon the lands of the New Amsterdam people, under the rule of the West India Company, in which it is said that "they of Hartford have beaten the servants of the high and mighty, the honored companie from their lands, with sticks and plow staves, and among the rest struck Ever Duckings (Evert Duyckinck) a hole in his head with a stick, so that the bloode ran downe very strongly downe upon his body."

Evert Duyckinck, the second of the name, who married Elsie Meyer,

February 3, 1704, settled, during the later Colonial times, at Raritan Landing, New Jersey. Of the nine children of Evert and Elsie Duyckinck, the third, Christopher, who married Catharine Gautier, was actively engaged during the Revolutionary War in aid of the struggle for independence. His son, Evert, the oldest of seven children, and the father of the subject of the present memorial sketch, became a resident of the city of New York about the beginning of the present century, and engaged in the business of a publisher and bookseller. His house, No. 9 Old Slip, and his store in Water Street, adjoining it in the rear, were well known to the residents of old New York, by whom he was held in high esteem during his thirty or forty years of active business life. He gave to Messrs. J. & J. Harper the first order they ever received for book printing. It was for two thousand copies of Seneca's *Morals*, a large edition for the time, and, considering the subject, perhaps larger than could be disposed of in these degenerate days by any of our modern publishers with all their increased appliances of trade.

A pleasant allusion to the veteran publisher was made in a letter of Diedrich Knickerbocker, published in the *American Citizen*, New York, January 23, 1810, not included in any collection of Washington Irving's Works, but reprinted in Mr. Stevens' *Magazine of American History*, for May, 1878. In this letter the veracious historian of New York expresses his regret that his work had not been published by his much esteemed friend, Mr. Evert Duyckinck, "a lineal descendant from one of the ancient heroes of the Manhattoes, whose grandfather and my grandfather were just like brothers." At the time of his retirement from business, Mr. Evert Duyckinck was the oldest publisher in New York. He died in the year 1833. It appears from a passing allusion in a note-book of his son Evert, that a love of domestic retirement and quiet was characteristic of the family. Speaking of the luxury of a wood fire in Paris, he says: "A wood fire will always be associated by me with home and my best early days by my father's and mother's fireside. My father had a Dutch tenacity to domestic habits that no friction of travel will rub out from me either. In his store in Water Street he kept heaped-up fires—a back log in the morning like a hogshead. In the ashes after dinner a few Carolina potatoes were commonly buried, where they lay heaped-up like the tombs of Ajax and Patroclus. In the evening, over the embers, my uncle Long always came to talk over the business of the day, while I kept close to the corner, rarely venturing to go among the dark shades at the further end of the room."

The only children of Evert Duyckinck, the publisher, attaining majority, were Evert Augustus and George Long, the latter named after the uncle just mentioned. The two boys, between whose ages there was a difference of seven years, grew up in that daily contact with books and literary associations which, to a mind naturally intelligent, is often the most potent influence in determining the pursuits of after years. Evert was graduated from Columbia College in the class of 1835, at the age of nineteen, and afterward spent two years in the law office of the eminent jurist and practitioner, John Anthon. He was admitted to the bar in 1837, but the profession of the law presented no attractions to his retiring and contemplative nature. His strong bias for literary studies and pursuits, conspicuous during his college course, had been shown in his contributions to leading literary journals published in New York. For Park Benjamin's *American*

Monthly he wrote some papers, under the title, "Felix Merry's Fireside Essays," which one of his classmates, a competent critic, characterizes as "a charming series of graceful, gossiping lucubrations." He soon afterward became a regular contributor to the *New York Review and Quarterly Church Journal*, for which he wrote reviews of the Poetical Works of Crabbe, Mrs. Hemans, George Herbert, and Goldsmith, besides many other critical pieces. His love of old English literature, the department of study in which he always delighted, was exhibited in an article in one of the earlier numbers of the same review, in which his name is associated as a contributor with those of Chancellor Kent and Bishop McIlvaine.

A little brochure, called the "Literary," had been issued as early as 1836, for which young Duyckinck, still in his minority, furnished an essay on the same favorite subject, "The Old Prose Writers," a most graceful paper, showing a thorough insight of the theme he treated, and marked by the taste and discrimination which always guided his pen, and the elevation of thought which was his constant source of inspiration.

In the autumn of 1838 he left home for a year of travel in Europe, which he made not merely an opportunity for gratifying the curiosity of an American in Europe, but largely a means of verifying by his own observation what he had learned in his studies of the life, manners, and associations of the Old World. "I desire," he says, in the opening pages of the diary from which a quotation has already been given, "to traverse Europe and look upon it with the eye of the Past, as Howell, or Evelyn, or Wotton travelled in the seventeenth century. I have come to see a various drama acted on a large scene, nor will I be disappointed for want of faith in the ordinary delusions of the theatre." He was most fortunate in forming the acquaintance, in Paris, of Mr. Harmanus Bleeker, of Albany, an eminent lawyer and scholar, a descendant, like himself, of a good Holland stock, who was about to visit the land of his ancestors under the most favorable auspices. He invited Mr. Duyckinck, and his friend and fellow traveller, James W. Beekman, to accompany him, an invitation gladly accepted. Mr. Bleeker was versed in the Dutch language and literature, and was well known in Holland, where soon afterward, during the Presidency of Mr. Van Buren, he represented the United States as Minister at the Hague. "As honest as Harmanus Bleeker," was a phrase of John Randolph which conveyed a sincere tribute to one of whom Duyckinck says, "he follows truth fearlessly in everything." He proved a most congenial and instructive companion in travel, delighting his juniors with his good sense and the results of his long experience at the bar and in public life, and with his fund of anecdotes, of which Duyckinck testifies, "they are always good, and always new and rare, and many an hour of travel have they beguiled on the long, straight roads of the Low Countries."

The tourists entered Holland at Grootzundert, a post on the frontier of Belgium. The appearance in their passports of such honest Dutch names as "Bleeker," "Duyckinck," and "Beekman," aided, no doubt, by the ingenuous countenances of their proprietors, elicited a courteous waiver of custom-house scrutiny, and the freedom of the Netherlands seems to have been conferred upon them without any troublesome formalities. A private audience of the King, accorded to Mr. Bleeker, as the President of the Saint Nicholas Society of the ancient city of Albany, and a ball at the palace of the Prince of Orange, were part of a round of entertainments and

hospitalities from which Duyckinck was disposed, under the impulse of his retiring and independent disposition, to draw back. "I began," he says, to question my position, when I found Mr. Bleeker received by the great lords of the State, and myself included in the invitations. I dislike to receive any attention to which I have not some right in myself. It sacrifices independence. But I was fairly invited by Mr. Bleeker to accompany him as a fellow-traveller. He draws these attentions upon us. For myself, I am a looker-on in Vienna."

Few lookers-on ever brought to the quiet task of observation more good sense or a keener appreciation of whatever was worthy of note. His rare opportunities for seeing life in Holland at its best were well improved. His journal, in the neat, firm handwriting, expressive of his exact method and nicety of taste, is a series of sketches drawn from nature and society with a vivid charm of expression in their descriptions of scenes and incidents of travel, which reminds one of the easy grace of Irving, and, in their pictures of social life and personal traits, of the quick vivacity of Horace Walpole. In company with Mr. Bleeker, Duyckinck made a thorough exploration of all the places of interest to a literary man and a Hollander by descent. In a book of heraldry, at the house of Baron Westreenan, a noted antiquarian, they found their respective coats of arms, and at the hospitable tables of the burghers of Amsterdam and the Hague a fraternal welcome. There, as the journal attests, "eternal amity was sworn between Holland and America, and if," says Duyckinck, "the ocean that separates us were of wine (like that in the *Veræ Historiæ* of Lucian) these Dutchmen would drink it up for the sake of a closer union."

It is curious and pleasant to observe from these notes of travel in Holland, more than forty years ago, the high repute in which the best people there held the American authors whose works were familiar to them through their translation into Dutch. With an ignorance as to the condition of society and manners in America so profound, that the question was put to Duyckinck by an intelligent Hollander, at a diplomatic dinner, whether travellers in his country "subsisted by the chase," they were yet highly appreciative of Irving's "Columbus," Marshall's "Life of Washington," and Cooper's novels. Perhaps these last had furnished the ground for the apprehensions of the worthy diner-out, that, in case he visited New Amsterdam, he would have to depend for his subsistence upon the success of the Leather Stockings of Manhattan Island in bagging their daily game. However this may be, the same kindly greeting given to these well-accredited tourists was accorded to the works of their countrymen, a fact which loses none of its interest in the thought that this was long before the history and the heroes of the Netherlands had received their best commemoration from the pen of an American scholar.

But, pleasant as were these hospitalities, it is evident that the ideal life which our traveller had set before him was quite different from one made up of social gayeties. His longings for quiet study and for labor in his chosen field were not dissipated. A characteristic entry in his journal betrays, perhaps quite unconsciously to himself, his ruling hereditary passion for a sequestered life. Returning from a stroll in the Deer Park, a favorite resort for his solitary rambles while a resident at the Hague, he writes: "If I were a believer in the ancient transmigration, I would sigh for the quiet, ruminating, contented ideas of a well-antlered deer, browsing leisurely along and watching the little business of his world around."

The dream of a home of domestic happiness and of congenial studies and pursuits was not long in having its full realization. After leaving Holland, in April, 1839, he spent the summer and autumn in England and Scotland; returned to New York late in the year, and renewed at once his cherished associations with his books and his co-workers in literary labors. His first serious work, after his return home, was in the editorship, in conjunction with Mr. Cornelius Matthews, of a monthly journal, *Arcturus*. Mr. William A. Jones was also engaged in the enterprise, and the three wrote almost all the articles. Some of Duyckinck's best work was done in this magazine, which is not inaptly described, in one of Edgar A. Poe's sketches of literary men, as "a little too good to enjoy extensive popularity." It ran through three volumes, and gave Duyckinck the opportunity of using his critical talent on a wider and more independent field than had formerly been open to him, and brought him into closer contact with authors and publishers, with whom he was always a favorite and a friend.

In April, 1840, he married Miss Margaret Wolfe Pantton, and soon afterward took up his permanent and lifelong residence at No. 20 Clinton Place, a home where the affections of wife, and children, and kindred, and the companionship of friends, all found their springs of happiness in his unvarying serenity of temper, his pure and elevated thought, and his devotion to duty. Here he gathered the treasures he most prized, the books which represented every department of general literature, but specially that in which he was versed. In seeking the best editions and in giving completeness to his collection he was aided, as also in many literary labors, by his brother, George L. Duyckinck, who, being much his junior in years, relied greatly on his counsel and was guided by his example.

In the early part of 1847 Mr. Duyckinck undertook the editorship of the *Literary World*, a weekly journal, designed as a vehicle for the best criticism on books and art, and the independent and impartial treatment of all topics relating to the cultivation of letters. The paper was hardly established before he resigned the editorial control to Mr. Charles Fenno Hoffman; but, about a year later, resumed it in connection with his brother George, then just returned from an extended tour in Europe, and by their united efforts it was carried forward with a single eye to the truest interests of a true literature. In the opening article of October 7, 1848, the number of the journal which marked the resumption of its control by Mr. Duyckinck, he concludes a striking summary of the aims of its conductors with these words, which well express his idea of the functions of the editor: "There is a class of topics to which no journalism should be insensible at the present day. The advancement of a sound popular education; the extension of the comforts and refinements of the few to the many; the amelioration of poverty and suffering embraced in those questions of social improvement which afford chivalric employment to the best men of the times—are all matters which arise naturally in connection with literature, science, and art. Virtue in action is the living body, of which invention and poetry are the eyes and heart."

In the conduct of the *Literary World* an elevated and inspiring tone was conspicuous, and Mr. Duyckinck drew around him many able coadjutors. It was at this time I saw him most frequently, always at his own house—for even then he mixed very little in society—where I was attracted

by the constant presence of men of mark in letters and art, and by the friendship subsisting between the two brothers and myself. The evenings in his library will long be remembered by many men whose ways in life have widely diverged in the years which followed the period to which I now advert, but who then were fond of gathering around his fireside, and there discussing the various topics of the day, or listening to the modest but always forcible expression of his critical opinions, or the quiet humor of his narrative of some incident or reminiscence which gave point to the subject of the moment. He was wholly free from the spirit of detraction, and, as a critic, was most discriminating, always just to authors of established repute, and always generous and kindly to young aspirants for literary distinction. The office of the critic was not allied, in his view, with the partisanship of special ideas or authors, nor was its chief function the suppression of rivals or the extinction of the weak and feeble. The savagery of the trenchant style of criticism was as alien to his idea of the true sphere of the literary censor as it was to the humanity of his nature, and he never turned his pen into a bludgeon or made it the instrument of any selfish or unworthy purpose. His own work, as a writer, was always conscientious and complete. To extreme delicacy of taste he added a rare grace and nicety of expression, and a certain tact in the handling and exhibition of his subject which gave a peculiar charm to what he wrote. His standard, both as to the style and the purpose of literary composition, was of the highest character. The fine phrase in which Horace describes the accomplishments of his friend,

“ ad unguem
Factus homo,”

he applied as the highest praise of a well-written book. It must be finished to the finger-nail, to meet the requirements of a just criticism, and to this severe test he sought to subject his own work as well as that of the authors on whom he sat in judgment.

I have dwelt on this period of his career, because it marked the time, not only of my closest acquaintance with him, but also of the enforced cessation of our constant intercourse. To a young man, called by necessity and choice to the severer studies and active duties of the bar, Ambrosian nights, and the society of even the choicest spirits in literature and art, were temptations to be shunned, and my way of life soon ran in a very different path from his. But to know Duyckinck once was to be intimate with him always, and the infrequent meetings of later years were invariably on the unchanged footing of our first friendship. To turn aside at long intervals from the daily routine of life and its common round of duties to revisit him in the quiet of his studies, was as when one leaves the dusty and sun-struck highway to seek in some neighboring and familiar shade and covert the spring he knows is hidden under the thicket close at hand, to thrust aside the intercepting branches, and to find in the clear perennial waters the same refreshment and strength as when he drank them first.

The *Literary World* was continued to the close of 1853. The experiment of a purely literary journal, dependent on its own merits, and not on the patronage of a publishing house, and appealing rather to the sympathies than the needs of that very small portion of the public which took satisfaction in a weekly presentation of the progress of ideas, without ref-

erence to their own party politics, their own religious denomination, their craving for continuous fiction, or their preference for wood cuts and caricatures, had been fairly tried, and the result was not encouraging. The Duyckincks were men of too much sense and too much substance to pursue a literary enterprise for the mere sake of a small corps of contributors, however brilliant, or a select circle of readers, however appreciative. They wisely withdrew from the field of newspaper competition, recognizing that inexorable law of supply and demand which less responsible projectors of like undertakings so often ignore until the very implements and paraphernalia by which they sought to enlighten the world and achieve immortality are sold under a chattel mortgage or a sheriff's execution.

But, although the *Literary World* was not a permanent success, the work done upon it was not lost. There is this difference between the failures of ventures in journalism and ordinary business reverses, that, while the types and presses and mechanical appliances by which they are carried on, may figure in a bankruptcy schedule as very unavailable assets, the written words to which they have given permanent form and expression on the printed page remain, and become a part of the great body of literature, to survive and to find their permanent place and value, if they are intrinsically worthy of preservation. Many a famous or well-deserving poem, essay, or article, has first seen the light as a contribution to some short-lived magazine or journal, which may have served as a kind of fire-escape for the genius imperilled by its destruction.

After the *Literary World* had ceased to exist, Duyckinck turned, doubtless with a sense of relief, to the more congenial labors to which the rest of his life was devoted, and in which he found his best sphere as a scholar and expert in English and American literature—the editing of books of permanent value, and the preparation of works of history and biography. He had already formed relations with the publishers as a book editor, the Library of Choice Reading from the press of Messrs. Wiley & Putnam having been one of his earliest projects, and the means of introducing some fresh books, out of the beaten track, to the reading public of thirty years ago.

In 1854 he undertook, with his brother, and under arrangements with Mr. Charles Scribner as its publisher, the preparation of the Cyclopædia of American Literature, a work of large proportions, demanding most extensive researches and a thorough acquaintance with the works of American authors. The design of the Cyclopædia was to bring together, as far as possible, memorials and records of the writers of the country and their works from the earliest period to the present day. "The voice of two centuries of American literature," says the preface, "may well be worth listening to." In aid of the work, numerous private collections of books and manuscripts were freely opened, and the custodians of leading public libraries took pleasure in furthering it. Eminent literary men made contributions of facts and memorabilia, conspicuous among whom was Washington Irving, who attested his early friendship for their father in his kind offices for the brothers Duyckinck. Their warm and constant friend, Dr. John W. Francis, was also most serviceable in his judicious and valuable aid.

Two years of faithful and diligent work were expended upon the Cyclopædia, many difficulties were surmounted, and, when it was finally completed and published, it took its place at once as the standard exposition

of the history, growth, and development of literature in America, and as a monument of the good taste, judgment, and discrimination of its editors. A supplement was added by Mr. Duyckinck in 1865, after the death of his brother, bringing the work down to that date.

I can only mention briefly the leading literary labors which followed the completion of the *Cyclopædia*. In 1856 Duyckinck edited the "Wit and Wisdom of Sidney Smith, with a Biographical Memoir and Notes." In 1862 he undertook the task of preparing the letter-press for the "National Portrait Gallery of Eminent Americans," published by Messrs. Johnson, Fry & Co., a series of biographical sketches and portraits, forming two quarto volumes. This work had a very extended circulation, the number of copies sold having long since exceeded one hundred thousand. A contemporary "History of the War for the Union," in three quarto volumes, and another extensive work, "Biographies of Eminent Men and Women of Europe and America," were written by him for the same publishers. He also edited for them a History of the World in four quarto volumes, compiled chiefly from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and in great part the work of his son George. These works were all executed with the fidelity and care which marked the performance of every task he undertook. Less elaborate works were the editing, with a memoir and notes, of the "Poems of Philip Freneau," the American edition of the "Poets of the Nineteenth Century;" a memorial of John Allan, the well-known New York book collector (printed by the Bradford Club), Commemorative Sketches of the Rev. Doctor Hawks, Henry T. Tuckerman, and James W. Beekman, read before the New York Historical Society, and printed by it, and similar memorials of John David Wolfe and Samuel G. Drake, the last named for the American Ethnological Society. Immediately after the death of Washington Irving, he gathered together, and published in a single volume, an interesting collection of anecdotes and traits of the great author, under the title "Irvingiana." In a note to a friend, giving some particulars in reference to this collection, which was made and completed in the short space of a month, he mentions a fact which accords with and illustrates his uniform delicacy of feeling and sense of propriety. "I wrote," he says, "a little preface in which, among other things, I stated that I had not entered on the work without the approval of Mr. Pierre Irving, who, as Mr. Irving's literary executor, I felt should be consulted as to the preparation of so extended a notice. For some publisher's notion this preface was omitted."

These various labors fully occupied all of his time aside from that given to his family, his church, and the institutions with whose interests he was identified. these were the New York Historical Society, which he served as a member of its executive committee, and as domestic corresponding secretary, the American Ethnological Society, the American Geographical Society, the New York Society Library, of which he was for many years, and up to his death, a trustee, aiding it greatly by his full knowledge as to books, and Columbia College, of which he was long an honored trustee. He was also a corresponding member of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society, of the Rhode Island Historical Society, and of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society. In these alliances with institutions designed for the promotion of history and kindred objects he found a companionship which he preferred to general society, and which aided him in his own work. But his chosen

and favorite place and post was his study, over whose door he might have written Coleridge's invocation,

"Tranquillity, thou better name
Than all the family of Fame."

Here, in absolute freedom from the distractions of the world, he pursued his studies and plied his pen in the scholarly tasks which engaged his thoughts. He was fully equipped for the best critical and biographical work. He knew the whole field of English literature, "as seamen know the sea." The authors of the Elizabethan age were as familiar to him as any of their successors of the Victorian era. Those "old fields," out of which comes so much of the "new corn" of modern thought and expression, were to him like the woodland and meadow around an ancestral homestead. In the general range of literature and on most of its special subjects his knowledge was complete as to authors and the proper critical estimate of their works and the various editions through which they had passed, and thus, as scholar, critic, and bibliographer, he was a standard authority. I know of no one to whom any vexed questions on points of literary inquiry could have been as safely referred for decision without further appeal as in a tribunal of last resort. Nor do I know any scholar of our country better fitted, by natural disposition and temperament, by study and research, by constant practice as a writer, by experience as journalist and editor, and by thorough magnanimity and impartiality of judgment, to discharge the duty and fulfil the trust of a literary critic.

His collection of books and his use of them was characteristic of the man, and indicated at once his catholic and conservative taste, embracing rare and particular editions of books, of which he knew the history and contents; special volumes to be prized for their peculiar place in literary annals; illustrated works, selected not so much for their artistic merit as with reference to the aid which the pencil brought to the text of the author; and special collections of engravings, among which he greatly prized his Stothards and his Cruikshanks. He was careful as to the condition and binding of his books, less as a matter of taste than with reference to the desert of the books themselves, and nothing in his library was for show. In fact, only his intimate friends knew the number of his books or their value. They were kept in various rooms of his house, and many of them out of sight; but they were always at hand when needed for reference, or in aid of any theme of discussion, or of the offices of friendship, and as occasion required he would, like the householder of the Scriptures, "bring forth out of his treasures things new and old." It is characteristic of the modesty of the man that his library, the object of his constant solicitude and of his just pride, should receive special and fitting recognition only after his death. He knew the great importance of preserving intact a collection which had grown up as the result of the judicious and careful selection of books in this country and in Europe, by himself and his brother, during a period of nearly forty years, and he wisely determined to provide for their permanent deposit in the alcoves of the fine public library with which Mr. Lenox has enriched the city. There the spirit of the gentle and refined scholar will seem to abide among the books he loved, which will perpetuate his name and be the lasting memorial of his taste and learning.

The home of which I have spoken, as the centre of so many domestic

affections, was visited by repeated and grievous sorrows. All the younger members of the household were, one by one, removed by death: the sisters by marriage, to whom he was as an older brother; the brother, to whom he was as a second father, and whose fine reverential spirit and intellectual taste found expression in the memoirs of the English Church worthies, Ken and Latimer and Herbert; and the three sons, whose promise and performance were full of satisfaction. The youngest, already alluded to, for his share in the preparation of the *History of the World*, died in the twenty-seventh year of his age. The oldest, Evert, lived only sixteen years; he had developed a fine taste and manly spirit, and was the constant companion of his father, to whom he was specially endeared. The second son, Henry, a graduate of Columbia College and a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church, was cut off in his early prime at the post of duty, a victim to his intrepid devotion to the work of beneficence and Christian philanthropy to which he had consecrated himself.

These heavy burdens of domestic grief were borne with a spirit of Christian fortitude. Mr. Duyckinck's religious views were simple and firm, resting on a thorough acquiescence in the verities of the Christian faith, as expressed by the church he revered, and of which he was a devout member. "The great background of his character," writes the Rev. Dr. Morgan, the Rector of St. Thomas's Church, in which he was many years a vestryman, "was his purity, or exquisite delicacy of organization; it led to extreme modesty and a want of even moderate self-assertion, but for the most part it was his glory. His pure mind and taste marked him in everything. The thing which fell specially under my notice was his painstaking diligence and fidelity in common, humdrum duties. He was clerk of the vestry of St. Thomas's, and I have still in my possession some of the blank-books which he filled with minutes and memoranda. It must have cost him a great deal of labor and consumed much precious time, but it was conscientiously done, even to the copying of long specifications. But, after all, the mind reverts to his quiet, studious habits and his long communion with the best men and minds of all time."

In a like vein the Rev. Dr. Rylance, Rector of St. Mark's Church, where he worshipped up to the time of his last illness, speaks of him as a "rare illustration of what Wordsworth calls 'natural piety,' beautified and hallowed by the wisdom which is from above." "My visits to him as a pastor," he writes, "were always rewarded by some increase of light or inspiration to my own mind or heart. But only as the last mortal hour approached did the singular excellence of Mr. Duyckinck's Christian character reveal itself. Through the long and painful decay of the outer man, the inner man was renewed day by day. No complaint or murmur did I ever hear from his lips, but the same chastened resignation ever showed itself as I approached the sufferer to minister what little comfort I could in his time of need. He would speak naturally, and with an earnestness of manner not usual with him, of the future life and of the good hope guaranteed by the gospel."

As an illustration of the catholicity of his religious views, I cite a single paragraph from his memorial sketch of the life of his old friend and companion in travel, James W. Beekman. Speaking of the religious side of Mr. Beekman's character, he says, "Parallel with the worth of the Bible to man, he regarded, and ever in his own practice religiously maintained, the observance of the Christian Sabbath, not in any Puritanical exaggeration

as a day of austerity and gloom, but as a period of repose from labor and its severities, a time for cheerful family and friendly intercourse, of prayer and praise, of the opening of the mind to the higher life of the soul. There was no spirit of exclusiveness in this, no obtrusion of personal views upon others, but a generous liberality of sentiment, which respected the rights of those who, mindful of one great end, might differ from him as to the particular ecclesiastical road in reaching it."

In the last literary work undertaken by Mr. Duyckinck, and which was completed only a short time before illness prevented him from further labor, he was associated with Mr. Bryant. The same publishers, for whom he had been engaged on the most important works already noticed, projected a popular edition of the Plays of Shakespeare, and the work of preparing and annotating the text was undertaken, at their request, by Mr. Bryant and Mr. Duyckinck. The editions of Shakespeare are almost innumerable, and so are the names of Shakesperian editors and commentators; but seldom has the task of arranging and setting in order that vast array of dramatic scenes and persons, whose infinite variety "age cannot wither nor custom stale," been confided to scholars more competent for its worthy execution. For the general supervision of the work and the special duty of scrutinizing the text when prepared, and of its final revision, Mr. Bryant was, of all American authors, best fitted, by his trained skill in the poetic art, his wonderful memory, embracing so much of literature and of literary annals, illustrative of the Shakesperian text, his severe taste, his long labor in the rendering of the Homeric poems into English verse, his large experience of life, his elevated and serene temperament, which made him so much a lover of nature and the human race, and so little dependent on companionship with individual men. These were rare qualifications for the semi-judicial function of determining the best and truest rendering of the very many obscure and doubtful passages in Shakespeare over which scholars and critics have so long contended. To Duyckinck was confided the severer and laborious task of the first preparation of the text, the collation from various readings and editions of the best version, and the annotation and arrangement of the whole work. Although the duty of the editors was fully discharged some time before the death of either of them, the preparation of the illustrations is not yet completed, so that whatever credit may justly be accorded to Bryant or to Duyckinck, for the work which will associate their names with that of the greatest of their masters in English literature, will be a posthumous honor. But the nature and extent of their respective shares in the editorial work are clearly defined in the manuscript preface by Mr. Bryant, a portion of which has recently been made public in the columns of the *Evening Post*, and in which he says:

"It now remains that something be said of the present edition and the accompanying notes. Among the variations in the text in the old copies, called readings, are many, the genuineness of which is matter of dispute among commentators. Of these, different minds will be apt to make a different choice, and in consequence any edition will, in respect to some of these readings, differ from every other. In selecting the most authentic of this class, I should not have been willing to rely on my own judgment and opportunities, and have therefore sought the co-operation of Mr. Duyckinck, whose studies, habits of research, and discrimination fitted him in a peculiar manner for the task. With the assurance of his assist-

ance, I undertook the work, and it is due to him to say that, although every syllable of this edition has passed under my eye, and been considered and approved by me, the preliminary labor in the revision and annotation has been performed by him."

It is pleasant to think that his last labor was one so congenial to his tastes. Hindered by no calls to alien or disturbing duties, or rough competitions in the outer world, it was pursued in the seclusion which he loved, among the ample sources of aid and illustration in the books by which he was surrounded. From the first scene to the last, he went page by page, line by line, through all the dramas which the world accepts under the name of Shakespeare, with the patient and conscientious care imposed by the nature of the work and his sense of duty, and, as we may well imagine, with something of the reverent devotion to the minutest details which a mediæval monk might have given to the task of illuminating the record of the legend of a patron saint or the text of the sacred canon. The labor thus delighted in was often an antidote to sorrow and pain and a source of strength and comfort. He showed me, on one occasion, with evident satisfaction, the portion of the work he had in hand; and to an intimate friend, in an interview near the close of his life, when he was suffering great pain, his patient endurance found relief in words supplied by the great dramatist—

"Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day."

The review thus taken of this life of literary labor presents a succession of unobtrusive, and yet most faithful and persevering efforts. Under the spur of necessity, or by the help of early association with some leading and liberal publisher, who could have discerned the practical uses of his peculiar gifts, he might, perhaps, have done greater things, and made his name more famous. But it was better that he should have pursued his own chosen path, and left us this rare instance of an unspoiled scholarly life, passed in the midst of a great commercial metropolis, which, with all its varied attractions and temptations, could not divert him from the pursuits to which he was devoted as by an irrevocable vow. We are under a great obligation to the scholar who thus attests his fealty to the cause of letters. In a great city, with its countless and ceaseless activities, where the participants in the daily round of duties, from the drudgery of the most menial service to the high-wrought schemes by which the highest material interests are served, are under the whip and spur of a necessity or a competition which suffers no choice and no cessation, the scholar and the student are indispensable. The preservation of a literature is no less needful than its growth, and while the great mass of educated men must follow special callings and professions, which debar them from the general studies and researches to which their tastes invite, it is a satisfaction to know that there are men qualified for the task, who keep watch over the sources and springs of literature, who defend it from what is unworthy, who are the custodians of its treasures and the guardians of its permanent interests. Their service is not conspicuous, and may be lightly esteemed, for it is not performed on a wide stage, nor in the glare of competition. They stay by the supplies, and it should be ours to see to it that, in the distribution of rewards, "as his part that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that remaineth by the stuff."

It may seem, in the retrospect of the life I have sketched, that it presents a character without a fault. If so, I might plead the grateful prerogative and privilege of the delineator of a purely private life, with no relation to public events imposing upon the biographer the duties and restraints which attach to the historian. In the portrait of the friend we love, we want to see him at his best; and if it is painted by the hand of affection, it may well present, in a single aspect, the idea of all that was most admirable in the original. The famous speech of Cromwell to Sir Peter Lely, "Paint me as I am," may have been only the shrewd self-assertion of a nature which imposed its rude restraint upon whatever was adventitious and not within the compass of its own control. And yet, if I were charged, as on the oath of a witness, to testify as to the failings of the subject of my sketch, I should have to seek for them outside of any knowledge or information of my own.

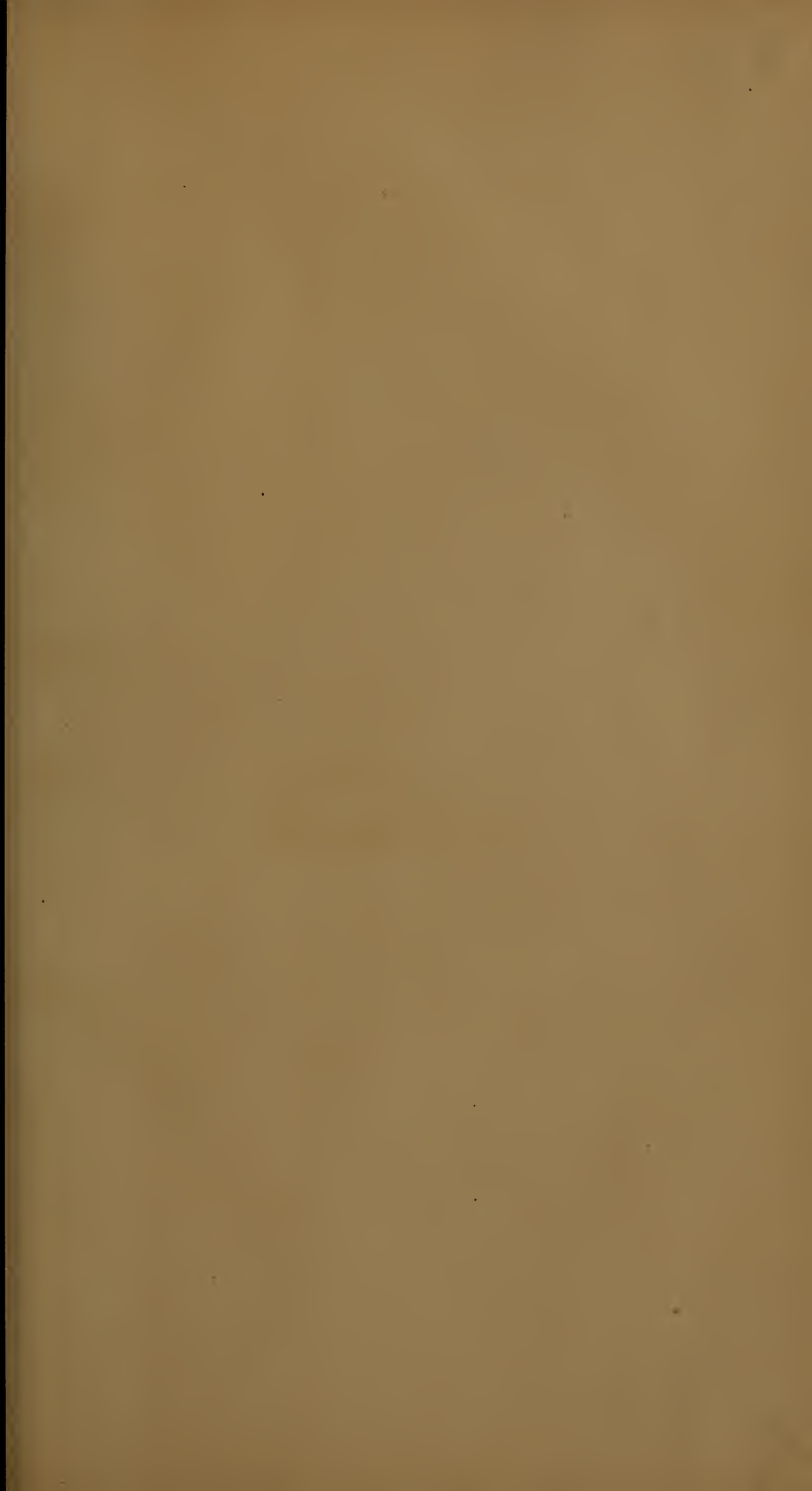
His was a life singularly free from blemish or blame, and equally exempt from enmity or detraction. It may be said that he was less exposed to temptation by reason of his seclusion from the world, but while the praises of the solitary life have often been set forth, it cannot be claimed in its behalf that the infirmities of the individual man part company with him when he quits the society of his fellows. He who mixes least with the world is apt to have the worst opinion of his kind, and to become querulous, if not cynical, just as the citizen who is earliest and most frequent in his despair of the Republic is usually the last and least serviceable in any effort for its rescue. The votaries of a pure literature are no exception to the rule. If Cowper fled from the world as the scene "where Satan wages still his most successful war," it was only to find in his seclusion new inward sources of conflict and distress, from which a closer contact with the world would perhaps have been the best safeguard. But our friend, in his self-chosen home life, was always in sympathy with the world without, thoroughly patriotic and loyal as a citizen, and most genial and hearty in his appreciation of whatever was deserving of general regard and esteem.

Although a recluse, he loved the city, its nearness to his quiet nook of study, the concourse of its streets, its public libraries and exhibitions of art, its repositories of books and engravings, its strong and busy life. He was never willingly away from it. A day's ramble in the country now and then sufficed for out-of-town enjoyments. I could never persuade him to pass a night under my suburban roof. Like Madame De Staël, who preferred a fourth story in the Rue de Bac to all the glories of Switzerland, he kept to the city, and shunned a change even in mid-summer heats. But, unlike her, his choice was for its solitude and not for its society, and such was the purity of his character that it did not corrode or become debased by being hidden from the light.

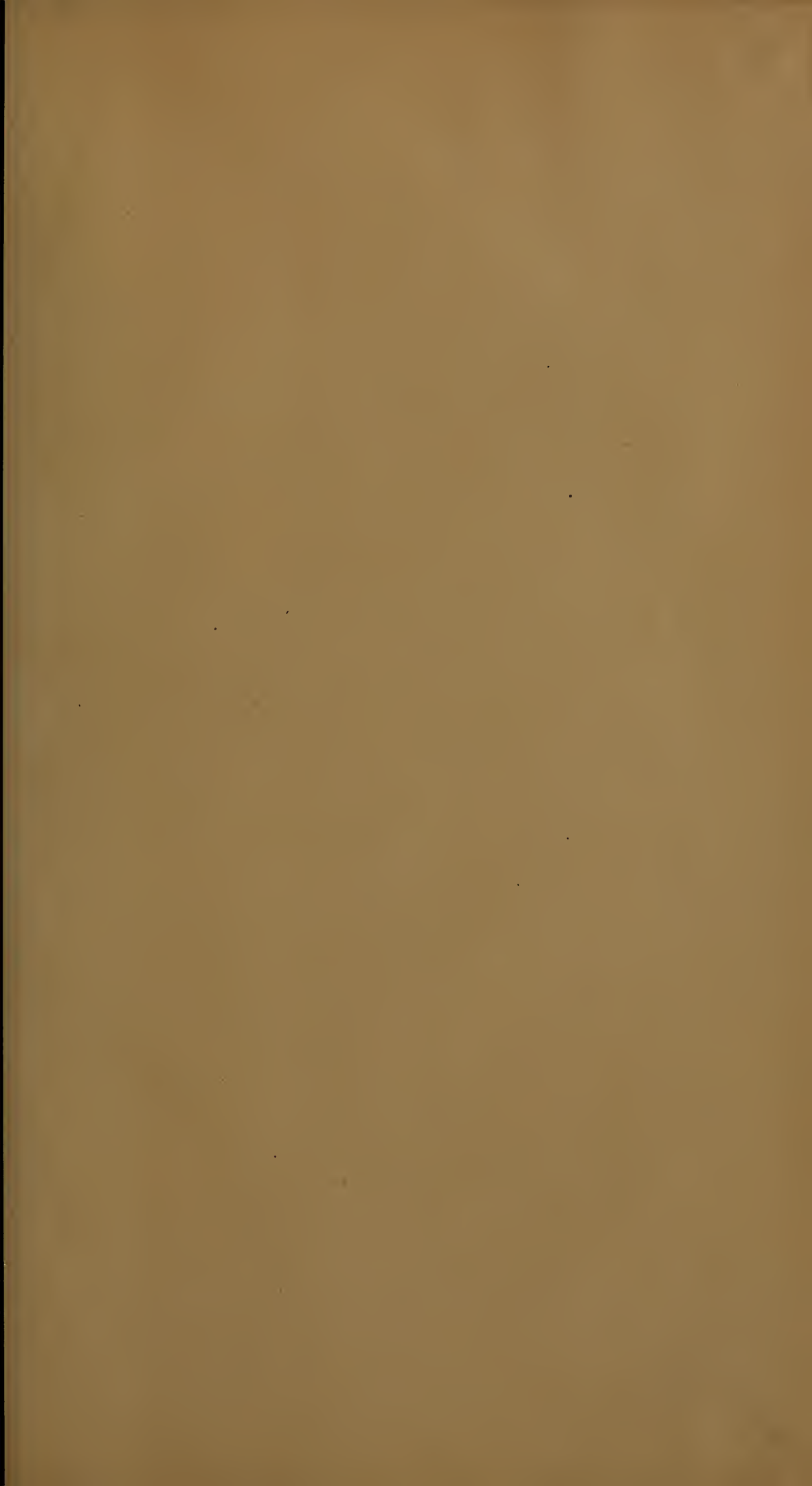
He is buried in the graveyard at Tarrytown, beside the old church of Sleepy Hollow. The spot was selected by himself and his brother long ago, as a place of family burial, on account of its loveliness of situation, its quaint surroundings, and the associations which have been woven about it by the master hand of Irving, whose grave is near his own. Hard by this rural solitude, along the iron pathway which skirts it, the heavily freighted trains move day and night, and eager crowds hurry to and fro on their ceaseless errands, while beyond, on the broad river, the gathered

fruits of the cornfields and prairies of the West go to seek a market in the great Metropolis, or beyond the sea. In this contrast of the grave, with its unchanging repose, beside the restless, rapid movements of the living, we may find an image, not inapt, of the life we have surveyed, so near the stir and rush of the outward world, and yet, in its calmness and serenity, so far removed, and, as we turn from the peaceful life, and the quiet grave, both alike are bright with the best memories of earth and the smile of heaven.

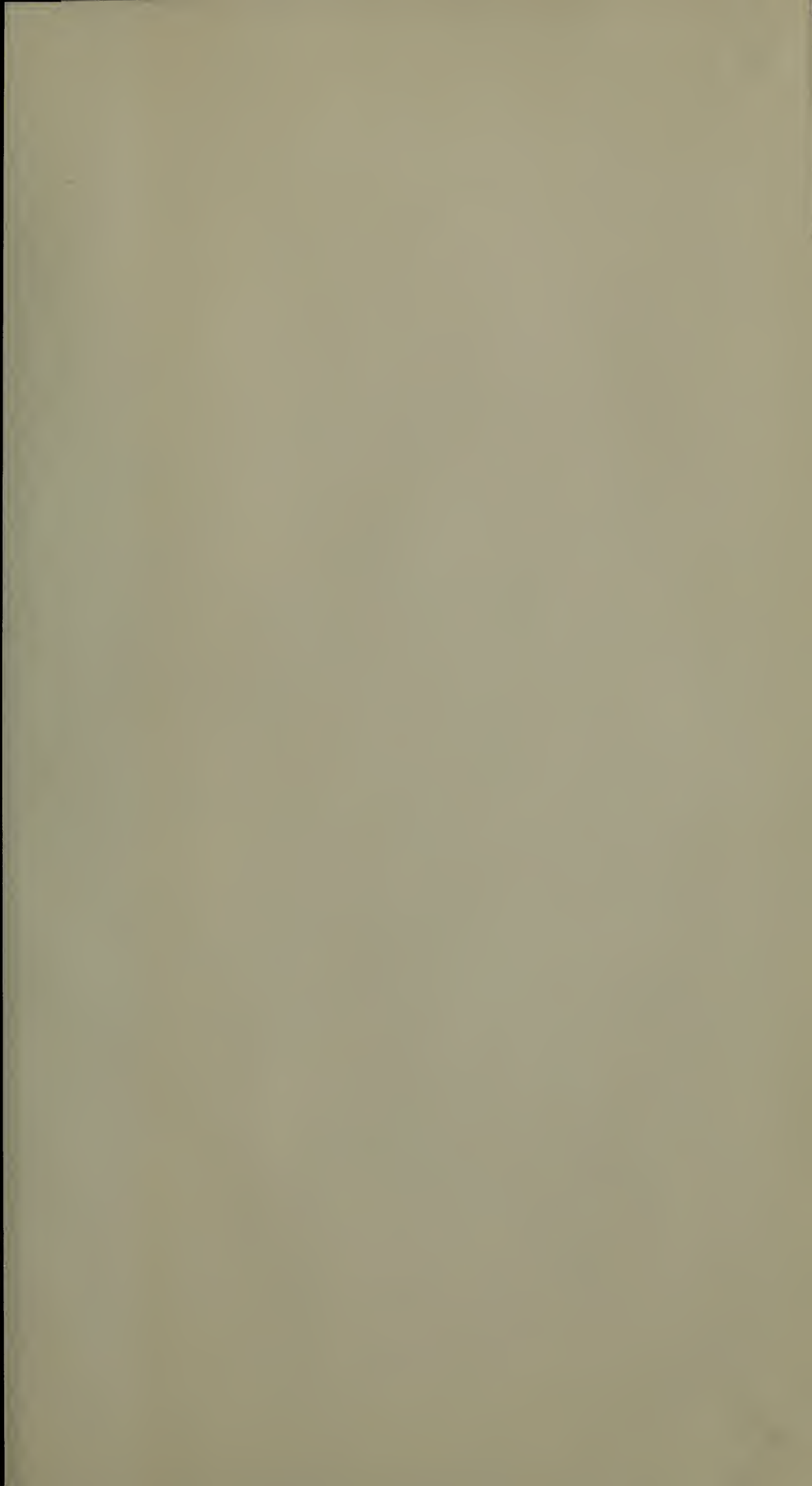


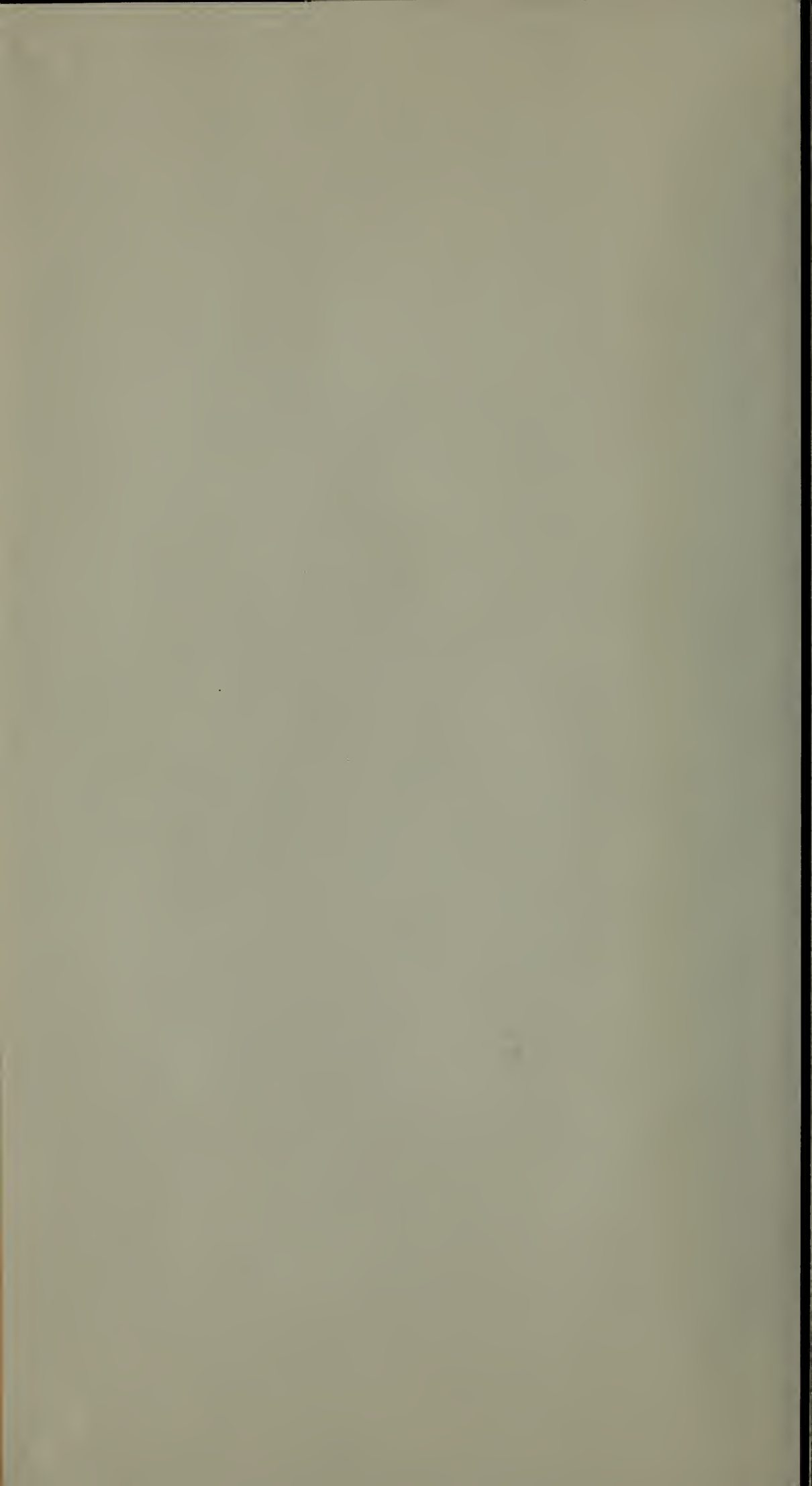


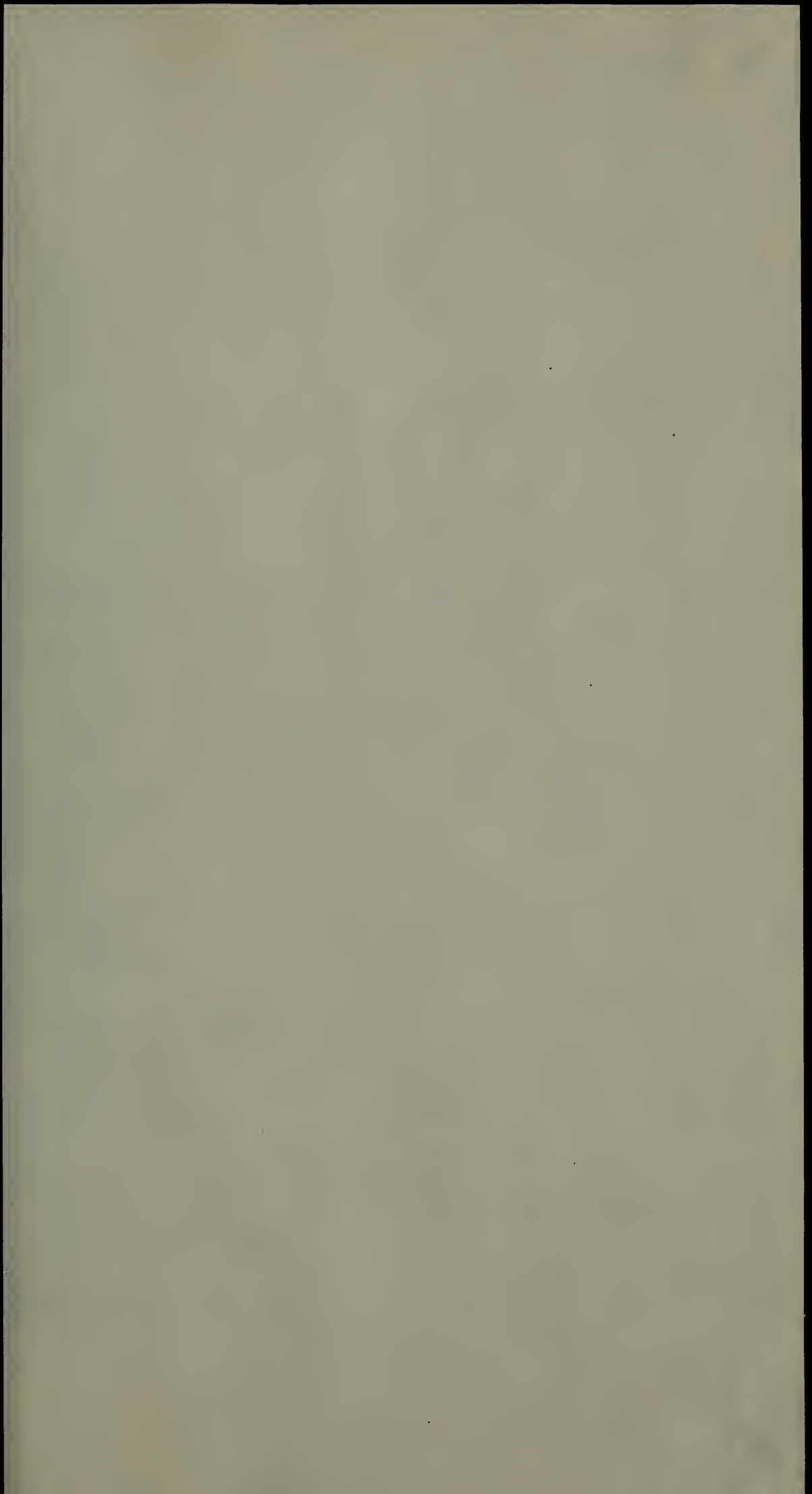














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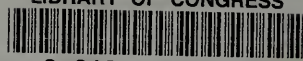
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